

Remarks

Support for the Amendments

The foregoing amendments to the specification are sought to correct inadvertent typographical errors. Therefore, these amendments introduce no new matter.

The amendments to claims 15, 31, 40-43 and 71 are sought to provide proper multiple dependency of these claims. Therefore, these amendments introduce no new matter.

Status of the Claims

By the foregoing amendments, claims 15, 31, 40-43 and 71 are sought to be amended. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-71 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 16, 17, 32, 44 and 55 being the independent claims.

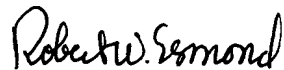
It is not believed that extensions of time or additional fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in the accompanying documents. However, if additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), and any fees required therefor and/or any additional fees necessary for entry and consideration of the foregoing (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. 19-0036.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested. Applicants believe the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will

expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Robert W. Esmond
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 32,893

Date: Aug. 24, 2004

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600